BRITISH COLUMBIA

MINISTRY OF SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

EIGHT PEAKS WINTER RECREATION SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING CHAPTER

The Eight Peaks Winter Recreation Sustainable Resource Management Planning (SRMP) area includes approximately 44,500 hectares of mountain slopes within about 15 kilometres of the community of Blue River (see Map 1). These slopes overlook the North Thompson River valley and the Mud Lake valley. Approximately 450 full-time residents make Blue River their home. The SRMP area is within the Simpcw (North Thompson Indian Band)/Secwepemc-claimed traditional territory.

Frequent heavy snowfalls and high annual snowfall accumulation make Blue River and adjacent areas attractive for winter recreation.[1] Both local residents and tourists enjoy snowmobiling and backcountry skiing in the planning area. The operations base for Mike Wiegele Heli-skiing (MWH) is in Blue River. From this community, MWH operates throughout the mountain ranges that bound much of the North Thompson River Valley. Blue River also supports a local snowmobile club, the Blue River Powder Packers.

Local residents and businesses are interested in expanding the range of winter recreation activities close to the community. The forest industry is supportive of sharing the land base with winter recreation, provided it does not unduly increase operating costs and there is controlled impact on the Timber Harvesting Land Base (THLB) over the short and long term. The mining sector has similar concerns. Strategic direction is, therefore, required to grow winter recreation in this planning area in a manner that integrates the activities where possible with other resource sector operations. Direction is also required to ensure this growth is not at the expense of the environment. A healthy environment is the foundation for a healthy wilderness and adventure tourism sector and a healthy community.

The goal of the Eight Peaks Winter Recreation SRMP Chapter is to establish resource management objectives to establish and maintain the conditions needed for sustainable growth of the winter recreation sector through integration with other resource sectors while incorporating the principles of sustainability[2] and stewardship.

The following Desired Future Condition statement has been developed to reflect the desired state of the planning area based on the goal of the Eight Peaks Winter Recreation SRMP Chapter.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION FOR THE PLANNING AREA:

Winter recreation will continue to grow at a moderate rate around Blue River. There will be a variety of motorized and non-motorized, public and commercial activities to enjoy. The local economy will be strengthened by the flow of visitor dollars. This will complement the benefits that continue to flow from an active forest sector. Local commitment to finding effective ways to balance the diverse needs of the user groups will ensure the quality of the recreation products available is high, and conflicts are infrequent. The measures implemented will reflect the strong commitment to stewardship, and will ensure that the growth of winter recreation will not result in adverse impacts to wildlife populations.

1 For the purpose of this planning process, "winter recreation" includes both public and commercial recreation, unless otherwise specified, and includes both snow- and ice-based activities and the associated infrastructure including trails and ski runs. All winter recreation activities, including harvesting activities undertaken to support winter recreation activities, shall be consistent with the objectives of this SRMP Chapter.

2 Sustainability, for the purpose of this Chapter, is defined as a state or process that can be maintained indefinitely. The principles of sustainability integrate the social, economic, and environmental components of sustainability into a system that can be maintained in a healthy state indefinitely.

OBJECTIVES:

To achieve the Desired Future Condition for the planning area, the following results-based objectives[3] shall be applied to the planning area (see Map 1). The context for each objective, its implementation strategies and initial measures of success are provided in Appendices 1 and 2. The objectives reflect all three pillars of sustainability—community/social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

1. FIRST NATIONS

1.a. Consider First Nations information and knowledge to strengthen land and resource management.

1.b. Consider aboriginal rights and traditional uses in resource management.

1.c. Identify and pursue initiatives with First Nations that support sustainable economic development.

2. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

2.a. Encourage a diversity of compatible winter recreation tenures and associated businesses consistent with direction provided in this document and in Appendices 1 and 2 for each specific Winter Recreation Management Unit (see Map 2).

3. FORESTRY

3.a. Integrate winter recreation activities with forest management to optimize economic and social benefits derived from both (for example, modified silvicultural requirements on heli-ski runs).

3.b. Pursue opportunities to minimize the loss of timber volumes and productive forest land base due to winter recreation development.

3.c. Design all openings for winter recreation activities to maintain availability of adjacent timber without creating undue constraints on harvesting.

3.d. Manage access within the planning area to integrate winter recreation and resource-based industrial requirements.

4. MINING

4.a. Consider opportunities to integrate winter recreation and mineral exploration and development activities.

4.b. Manage exploration (temporary) and mine (permanent) accesses in a manner that supports public and commercial winter recreation.

4.c. Reclaim surface disturbances promptly to mitigate potential health and safety risks, and to facilitate continued use for winter recreation, on land used for winter recreation, especially where there are trails and ski runs.

[3] The objectives have been grouped into "like" categories with clearer understanding and presentation of background information in Appendix 1.

OBJECTIVES:

5. RECREATION AND TOURISM

5.a. Minimize conflicts between user groups, maintain quality experiences, and retain environmental values by directing winter recreation activities to the appropriate Winter Recreation Management Units (see Map 2), and by incorporating the guidance provided through the Desired Future Condition statements and unit-specific strategies detailed in Appendix 2.

5.b. Integrate winter recreation activities with other resource-based activities to optimize economic and social benefits derived from the diversity of uses, and minimize negative impacts that one resource activity may have on another.

5.c. Minimize the disturbance from helicopters on the community of Blue River.

5.d. Manage access in a manner that supports the needs of public and commercial winter recreation, resource-based industries and wildlife in the planning area.

6. VIEWSCAPES

6.a. For all new openings, achieve the assigned visual quality objectives as defined through the Kamloops LRMP implementation process.

6.b. Consider modifying existing cut blocks and ski runs to improve visual appearance when new cut blocks and other developments are planned in the adjacent areas.

6.c. Design winter recreation developments in accordance with visual design principles to minimize visual quality constraints on surrounding timber availability.

* Includes trails, ski runs, emergency structures, and buildings.

Objectives

7. Key Wildlife Species

Grizzly Bears

7.a. Design winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities to maintain functional integrity of grizzly bear habitat, prevent bear access to human-supplied foods, and minimize bear-human encounters.

Mountain Caribou

7.b. Design winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in such a way as to maintain the natural distribution of caribou, minimize stress caused by human disturbance and maintain the functional integrity of habitat.

7.c. Update existing recreation management plans to better reflect the best available wildlife inventory guidelines and monitoring procedures.

Mountain Goats

7.d. Design winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities to maintain the natural population distribution of mountain goats, avoid displacement of animals caused by recreation use, and maintain habitat quality.

7.e. Update existing recreation management plans to better reflect the best available wildlife inventory guidelines and monitoring procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION

Approval of strategic level plans gives direction to operational level plans, but does not constitute approval of operational plans or proposals. Operational planning forms the link between strategic planning direction and operational implementation and integration.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Successful implementation of this Chapter will require the development of cooperative agreements between user groups, formalized legally where appropriate by government, and adhered to by all. A key element to the successful implementation of this Chapter will be cooperation between forest and commercial recreation tenure holders to fully realize the opportunities to integrate commercial winter recreation development with operational timber harvesting. Cooperative agreements will be required between these parties to manage access and timber harvesting, including scheduling of activities, sharing of costs, defining legal liabilities and monitoring processes. Cooperative agreements and operational level management plans (see below) are integrally linked and will be developed in conjunction with one another.

Where parties are unable to negotiate a cooperative agreement, despite significant effort by all, the statutory decision maker responsible for applications for the works required (i.e. cutting permits) should review and consider rationales submitted by both parties prior to approving or rejecting the application. Timber harvesting and development of winter recreation infrastructure may proceed in the absence of cooperative agreements, provided it is consistent with the objectives of this Chapter, the Kamloops LRMP and other government policy.

Cooperation between commercial recreation tenure holders and public winter recreation users will also be essential to minimize potential conflict.

OPERATIONAL LEVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Integration of recreational activities and forest development at an operational level, should attempt to minimize harvesting costs, maximize recreational benefits, and, where possible, optimize forest benefits. Recreation development proponents should work in partnership with forest operators and relevant agencies to develop and implement an operational level management plan. This management plan should utilize the concept of "total chance planning."[5] The approval agencies should determine the level of public and stakeholder input that is required.

This operational level management plan will form the basis for cooperative management and agreements. It should outline and clarify the methods by which Chapter objectives will be met, indicate the ways in which key impacts will be mitigated, and outline the cooperative framework and scheduling of forest harvesting, silvicultural activities, and ongoing forest management responsibilities. The operational level management plan is an integral part of operational documents and, in many cases, will form the basis for operational monitoring and compliance. The operational level management plan should be included as part of the commercial recreation tenure approval or amendment document.

[5] "Total Chance Planning" is preliminary long term integrated resource management planning over an entire development area for the best realization of all broader or strategic objectives. It often serves as the link between strategic planning direction and operational details.

MONITORING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Indicators that can be used to test the implementation of the results-based objectives are detailed in Appendix 1 as Measures of Success. Additional site-specific measures may be developed during the operational planning and approval processes. The responsibility for monitoring is a function of the government agencies involved. For example, the Ministry of Forests is responsible for harvesting-related activities; Land and Water BC Inc. is responsible for monitoring management plans tied to commercial recreation tenures. Agencies may direct proponents, tenure holders and operators to devise and implement monitoring and reporting systems.

Every two years, the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM) will conduct a review of approved SRMP Chapters to assess progress in Chapter implementation. Every five years, the MSRM Regional Director will conduct a review of approved SRMP Chapters to assess the extent to which the Chapters are effective in achieving defined objectives. Where regional interpretation of effectiveness monitoring results shows that the objectives are not effective in achieving stated planning Chapter goals, the MSRM Regional Director will coordinate the development of measures to improve effectiveness.

MSRM recognizes that new information will become available over time that may require revisiting portions of this planning Chapter and therefore will monitor implementation of this Chapter accordingly. This SRMP Chapter and/or the legal objectives established to implement it may be subject to review at times other than the specified two/five year scheduled review, in order to address issues that arise.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Compliance and enforcement is linked to fulfillment of conditions in operational tenure documents, and to relevant Provincial and Federal laws and regulations and is the responsibility of the relevant agencies.

APPROVAL

The Eight Peaks Winter Recreation Sustainable Resource Management Planning Chapter is hereby approved this day, _____, 2003.

_____

Honourable Minister Stan Hagen
Minister of Sustainable Resource Management

** All photos within the Eight Peaks SRMP Winter Recreation Chapter were provided by: Alvin Dyck, Myles Bruns, Doug Jury, Mike Wiegele Heli-skiing, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, and Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management.*

MAP 1: STEWARDSHIP

Insert Stewardship (Map 1)

MAP 2: WINTER RECREATION MANAGEMENT UNITS

Insert Winter Recreation Management Units (Map 2)

APPENDIX 1 — SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This Appendix provides additional detail to support implementation of the objectives of this Sustainable Resource Management Planning (SRMP) Chapter. The objectives and companion strategies are intended to foster sustainable growth of the winter recreation[1] sector while seeking ways to mitigate potential impact on other resource-based sectors and the environment. They reflect all three pillars of sustainability–community/social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

The objectives have been grouped into categories in order to provide common support information. The following information is provided for each category:

- Background information including discussion of winter recreation management issues for the planning area that fall within the defined scope of this planning process;[2]
- Reference to relevant management direction from the Kamloops Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP);
- Desired Future Condition to demonstrate the intended outcome for each category of objectives;
- Results-based objectives;
- Implementation strategies for each objective, and links to strategies for specific Winter Recreation Management Units detailed in Appendix 2; and
- Initial results-based measures of success which will be monitored to evaluate whether the objectives are met.

All land and resource-based activities must be consistent with the objectives of this planning Chapter. The strategies detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 are guidelines that should be followed in order to ensure the objectives are met. As better scientific information becomes available and innovative operational practices are developed, alternative strategies can be followed provided the objectives of this Chapter are met.

[1] For the purpose of this planning process, "winter recreation" includes both public and commercial recreation, unless otherwise specified, and includes both snow- and ice-based activities and the associated infrastructure including trails and ski runs. All winter recreation activities, including harvesting activities undertaken to support winter recreation activities, shall be consistent with the objectives of this SRMP Chapter.

[2] Issues identified through this planning process that fall outside the scope set out in the project Terms of Reference are detailed in the Eight Peaks SRMP Winter Recreation Chapter Consultation Log.

1. FIRST NATIONS

Aboriginal people use the area for sustenance, cultural and spiritual activities. Historically, their survival depended on the land and its resources, a fact reflected in their culture, language and heritage. Conservation and sustainable use of the environment is of key importance to the Simpcw people.

Aboriginal people contribute significantly to the area's monetary economy and also participate in their own informal, traditional economy. The Simpcw people seek sustainable economic development opportunities that benefit themselves and their neighbours.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

Access to and use of the land and resources for traditional, cultural and spiritual activities by aboriginal peoples is maintained. Archaeological sites and properties, spiritually significant sites, burial sites, and traditional use areas are respected. A strong local economy with First Nations opportunities for diverse and sustainable economic development.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

1.a. Consider First Nations information and knowledge to strengthen land and resource management.

1.b. Consider aboriginal rights and traditional uses in resource management. Implementation strategies include:

- Relevant agencies, industry, and recreation proponents will consult with First Nations to ensure that aboriginal rights and title are duly considered and that appropriate accommodation is made when required.
- Relevant agencies, industry, and recreation proponents strive to consider and accommodate First Nations interests when developing and implementing management plans.
- Provincial agencies to negotiate protocol agreement(s), interim measure(s), or treaty with First Nations to address issues outside the scope set out in the Terms of Reference.

1.c. Identify and pursue initiatives with First Nations that support sustainable economic development. Implementation strategies include:

- Encourage the development of new First Nations businesses and business partnerships.
- Encourage the negotiation of business partnerships or joint ventures between First Nations, forest licensees, or recreation development proponents.

INITIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- √ Open dialogue and constructive, positive relationships between First Nations, agencies, industry, and recreation proponents.
- √ Protocol agreement, interim measure, or treaty negotiated between First Nations and provincial agencies or government.
- √ New First Nations businesses and business partnerships or joint ventures negotiated between First Nations, forest licensees, or recreation development proponents.

2. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

The economic base and quality of life of the community of Blue River is closely tied to the local landscape. The forest industry, commercial outdoor recreation, and transportation sector have provided employment and business development opportunities. Residents have enjoyed the serenity of the rural lifestyle, the spectacular setting, and the extensive outdoor recreation opportunities.

Maintaining a diversity of economic opportunities is key to healthy communities and sustainable economies. Diversification should include both the local development of different economic sectors and local involvement in different components of existing activities. Continuing to develop a strong local economy based on natural resources is a key interest of the community and of residents of the North Thompson Valley. This interest includes supporting a diversity of businesses as well as a high quality of life to retain and attract residents. Given the mountainous landscape and exceptional snow conditions, development of winter recreation activities is an identified opportunity.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

A diversity of winter recreation businesses will contribute to both Blue River and North Thompson Valley economies. The winter recreation community will work together to encourage compatible activities. Conflicts will be addressed before they escalate and negatively impact the quality of the recreation product. The resulting certainty will draw further financial investment into the community.

KAMLOOPS LRMP (1996) DIRECTION:

No Direction Provided

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

2.a. Encourage a diversity of compatible winter recreation tenures and associated businesses consistent with direction provided in the main document, this Appendix and Appendix 2 for each specific Winter Recreation Management Unit (see Map 2). Implementation strategies include:

- Consider existing land and tenure interests.
- Identify compatible tenure opportunities for potential new businesses.
- Strive to resolve real or perceived incompatibilities with innovative approaches.

INITIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

√ A diversity of new businesses are established in Blue River that offer winter recreation products or support services.

√ Existing tourism operations diversify the products they offer by working with commercial recreation operators to develop new product packages.

3. FORESTRY

The majority of the forests within the planning area are included in the Provincial Forest, and a substantial portion of the area is available and suitable for timber harvesting. Four tenure holders and the BC Timber Sales Program have operating areas within the planning area.

In many areas of the province, forestry and tourism activities have competed for the same land base, resulting in conflicts and increased costs for both sectors. However, in this planning area, there are opportunities to integrate winter recreation with forest management to derive greater level of benefit for the community and the region. An example of integration is the proposal to create managed forest heli-ski runs, where innovative forest management techniques will be piloted to create rotational open and managed forest heli-ski runs.[3] Innovative forest management techniques will be piloted to create opportunities to regenerate portions of the runs while supporting heli-skiing over the full rotation. The impact on the timber supply over the Timber Supply Area (TSA) in the event the trials do not result in merchantable regeneration is considered minimal, and thus the risk associated with the pilots can be incurred.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

The planning area will continue to support a viable forest industry that collaborates with public and commercial winter recreation groups to identify and implement opportunities to integrate both sectors, thereby providing ongoing benefits for the Blue River and North Thompson economies. Cooperation, innovation, and flexibility will ensure neither sector is unduly constrained by the other.

KAMLOOPS LRMP (1996) DIRECTION:

General Resource Management Zone (Section 2.1.13)

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

3.a. Integrate winter recreation activities with forest management to optimize economic and social benefits derived from both (for example, modified silvicultural requirements on heli-ski runs). Implementation strategies include:

- Relevant agencies, forest industry, and recreation proponents work together to identify and implement opportunities to integrate the different land-based conditions required for winter recreation and to ensure safe, effective forest stand management.
- Coordinate and share planning information between forestry and recreation sectors as early as possible to facilitate efficient integration of harvesting with proposed winter recreation.
- Continue collaboration between sectors as new management plans for each are developed (for example, as Forest Stewardship Plans, Commercial Recreation Tenure Management Agreements or operational level recreation management plans are developed or amended).
- Design long vertical openings (e.g., ski runs) to minimize potential forest health losses (such as blowdown and beetle infestation), incorporating techniques that can be contained within the opening width rather than on adjacent forested land.
- Wherever stand level integration of forest and recreation management is feasible, such as for rotational and managed forest runs, regenerate the site to continue producing merchantable timber as part of the harvestable land base.

[3] Rotational heli-ski runs: Temporary heli-ski runs, making use of recently harvested and fully restocked areas until such time as regeneration heights impedes skiing or skiing may cause damage to regeneration. At that time, skiing will cease on that area and may move to another recently harvested and fully restocked area. Additional runs continue to fully contribute to the area timber supply.
Managed forest ski runs: Permanent (multi-use) heli-ski runs (200 meter maximum width) created and managed to provide for ski terrain. Forest cover is reduced or regenerated to reduce timber availability impacts on slopes still working forest lands, by clear cutting to improve snow management, prompt hydrologic growth up to reduce the adjacent clear cut area identified within these runs, improved environmental values, and reduced mature hazards. Within these runs may be removed from the timber harvesting land base, they will be used to pilot innovative silviculture techniques, in an effort to regenerate at least part of the run with merchantable timber for future harvesting.
Open terrain ski runs: Permanent (multi-use) heli-ski runs (200 meter maximum width) created primarily as a combination heli-skiing, and previously released from the timber harvesting land base. Released or managed forest cover and vegetation on these runs contributes to snow management, environmental values, and ski terrain design, ensuring timber (cover) limits are not imposed on adjacent harvestable land.

3. FORESTRY (CONTINUED)

- Winter recreation developers will address related forestry costs for new infrastructure openings, including but not limited to engineering, harvesting, road construction, landing construction, in excess of what would normally be allowed by the Ministry of Forests through the appraisal system (for example, by negotiating third party agreements with forest licensees).

3.b Pursue opportunities to minimize the loss of timber volumes and productive forest land base due to winter recreation development. Implementation strategies include:

- MOF, licensees and recreation proponents work together to identify and implement opportunities to minimize the area removed from the timber harvesting land base (THLB) for winter recreation infrastructure and activities.
- Implement management techniques to mitigate impact on the THLB from within the openings created for winter recreation activities (for example, manage for blow down and forest health concerns within the area managed as a heli-ski run, not in the adjacent forest).
- Bring forward development strategies for proposed winter recreation infrastructure development as early as possible in order to allow sufficient time to foster integration with licensees' silviculture and stand management plans and prescriptions.
- On managed forest heli-ski runs, develop and pilot innovative silvicultural practices such as modified reforestation stocking standards, retention of portions of the original stand, and alternative site preparation to demonstrate the viability of integrating forest management and winter recreation on the same site.
- Where openings created for recreation developments are no longer required or effective, the areas should be brought back into forest production.

3.c. Design all openings for winter recreation activities to maintain availability of adjacent timber without creating undue constraints on harvesting. Implementation strategies include:

- Implement effective management of these openings, including consideration of cumulative visual impact and equivalent clear-cut area implications, to ensure that undue constraints are not created on adjacent harvestable lands. This includes openings created under a License to Cut.
- Winter recreation developers should collaborate with forest licensees to develop an operational recreation management plan for proposed openings that incorporates 'total chance planning'[4] to minimize the impact on the THLB.

3.d. Manage access within the planning area to integrate winter recreation and resource-based industrial requirements. Implementation strategies include:

- Regular communication with the winter recreation sector, agencies, and other industrial users to develop collaborative strategies for access management to minimize conflict and risk to all road and trail users, while balancing the needs of various user groups and industries.
- Consider winter recreation use in road deactivation plans to minimize the impact on these users while achieving deactivation objectives.
- Design access routes to retain the quality of the experience for winter recreation activities (for example, minimize the number of crossings of an

4 "Total Chance Planning" is preliminary long term integrated resource management planning over an entire development area for the best realization of all broader or strategic objectives. It differentiates on the site between strategic planning direction and operational details.

3. FORESTRY (CONTINUED)

established ski run or the number of roads being put into an area where non-motorized recreation is focused).

- Ensure adequate notice is given to the winter recreation community when road and trail closures are proposed.

INITIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- √ Openings for winter recreation activities do not create undue constraints on harvesting of adjacent forested lands.
- √ The cumulative net reduction to the timber supply for the Kamloops Timber Supply Area due to winter recreation use of the harvestable land base is minimal.
- √ The total area required to develop and maintain open and managed frontcountry heli-ski runs in the planning area does not exceed removing more than 1350 ha from the timber harvesting land base in the long term.
- √ Innovative silviculture techniques based on scientific decision-making are piloted to find viable methods for keeping land used for managed forest ski runs as part of the THLB.
- √ Partnerships are developed to monitor and assess the effectiveness of innovative silviculture techniques and to determine if these techniques may have broader provincial application.
- √ Local timber availability and supply is not significantly affected due to winter recreation infrastructure development.
- √ Access planning and management is collaborative, involving the forest sector, government agencies (including WLAP) and winter recreation user groups and tenure holders.

4. MINING

Government policy is to maintain full access outside of protected areas for subsurface resource exploration and development. Consequently, the direction provided in this Chapter is not intended to impede the permitting of subsurface resource exploration and development. However, mineral activities can directly or indirectly affect access and site conditions that are needed to support winter recreation. The following objectives are intended to sustain access for mining while mitigating adverse impacts to winter recreation infrastructure and activities.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

Mineral lands within the planning area will remain open for mineral exploration and development. Cooperation, innovation, and flexibility will ensure neither sector is unduly constrained by the other.

KAMLOOPS LRMP (1996) DIRECTION:

General Resource Management Zone (Section 2.1.11)

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

4.a. Consider opportunities to integrate winter recreation and mineral exploration and development activities. Implementation strategies include:

- Design exploration disturbances on or around winter recreation routes, trails and ski runs.
- Collaborate with winter recreation tenure holders and user groups to identify opportunities to avoid or mitigate potential conflicts (for example, implement simple and cost-effective mitigation measures such as relocating trails where feasible, redirecting recreation activities at the time of exploration, or timing exploration to avoid conflict in areas frequently used for recreation).

4.b. Manage exploration (temporary) and mine (permanent) accesses in a manner that supports public and commercial winter recreation. Implementation strategies include:

- Consider strategies detailed in Appendix 2 for specific Winter Recreation Management Units when planning access routes.
- Solicit input from winter recreation user groups and tenure holders.

4.c. Reclaim surface disturbances promptly to mitigate potential health and safety risks, and to facilitate continued use for winter recreation, on land used for winter recreation, especially where there are trails and ski runs.

INITIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

√ Mineral land and tenure remain accessible for exploration and development.

√ Access planning and management is collaborative, involving mineral and winter recreation tenure holders and winter recreation user groups.

√ Surface disturbances are reclaimed promptly to facilitate winter recreational use, especially where there are trails and ski runs.

5. RECREATION AND TOURISM

The winter recreation sector in the North Thompson must be economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. Potential impacts on the environment, wildlife, (including species such as mountain caribou and goats), other user groups, and the quality of the recreational experience must be addressed as recreational use grows in the area.

The opportunity to enjoy winter recreation activities on Crown land contributes directly to the quality of life for residents of the North Thompson valley and beyond. However, with a growing population, changing technology that allows more people to travel deeper into the backcountry, and a growing diversity of recreational pursuits, it is becoming more critical for recreational user groups to work together to share the land base. Compatible uses can be encouraged in this planning area, recognizing that all uses are not compatible in all areas. Collaboration will be critical to ensure all user groups have the opportunity to recreate and enjoy a quality experience.

Recreation proponents must seek opportunities to minimize the impact of their activities on the other sectors. Economic sustainability will come from keeping all components of the regional economy strong.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

A variety of new and established sustainable winter recreation activities will be offered within the planning area. Strong collaboration amongst all users in the recreation community will ensure conflicts are avoided and compatible uses are sought, including the integration of new public and commercial activities. Focus areas (based on the Winter Recreation Management Units of this Chapter) will be established to ensure certainty that all users have an opportunity to enjoy their winter recreation pursuits within the planning area. The growth of winter recreation will be through collaboration with other resource industries and will reflect the strong commitment to environmental stewardship.

KAMLOOPS LRMP (1996) DIRECTION:

- *General Resource Management Zone (Section 2.1)*
- *Tourism Objectives and Strategies (Section 2.1.7)*
- *Recreation Objectives and Strategies (Section 2.1.8)*
- *Special Resource Management Zone–Recreation and Tourism (Section 2.6)*
- *General Objectives and Strategies (Section 2.6.1)*
- *Area Specific Objectives and Strategies (Section 2.6.2)*

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

5.a Minimize conflicts between user groups, maintain quality experiences, and retain environmental values by directing winter recreation activities to the appropriate Winter Recreation Management Units (see Map 2), and by incorporating the guidance provided through the Desired Future Condition statements and unit-specific strategies detailed in Appendix 2. Implementation strategies include:

- Integrate new, compatible winter recreation activities consistent with the Desired Future Condition and the strategies for each Winter Recreation Management Unit detailed in Appendix 2.
- Incorporate the management strategies, detailed in Appendix 2, that are specific to the Winter Recreation Management Unit(s) where the activity is proposed.
- Proponents should develop operational plans for new commercial recreation tenures and new public recreation areas clearly detailing how the objectives of this Chapter will be implemented.

5. RECREATION AND TOURISM (CONTINUED)

- The local recreation community should establish an advisory committee to seek opportunities to integrate activities and resolve conflicts between overlapping uses before they escalate.

5.b. Integrate winter recreation activities with other resource-based activities to optimize economic and social benefits derived from the diversity of uses, and minimize negative impacts that one resource activity may have on another. Implementation strategies include:

- Design and develop winter recreation infrastructure including roads, trails and ski runs to minimize impacts on other resource industries on adjacent Crown land.
- Winter recreation developers will address related forestry costs for new infrastructure openings, including but not limited to engineering, harvesting, road construction, landing construction, in excess of what would normally be allowed by the Ministry of Forests through the appraisal system (for example, by negotiating third party agreements with forest licensees).
- Recreation development proponents should work in partnership with forest operators and relevant agencies to develop and implement an operational level management plan. This management plan should utilize the concept of 'total chance planning.' It should outline and clarify the methods by which Chapter objectives will be met, indicate the ways in which key impacts will be mitigated, and outline the cooperative framework and scheduling of forest harvesting, silvicultural activities, and ongoing forest management responsibilities.
- Participate in the implementation of corresponding strategies detailed in the Forestry and Mining sections above.

5.c. Minimize the disturbance from helicopters on the community of Blue River. Implementation strategies include:

- Develop flight plans that avoid flying directly over Blue River except for emergency purposes.
- Strategically locate fuel caches to reduce the need to return to the Blue River base to refuel.
- Develop daily flight plans that minimize the number of flights in and out of the Blue River base.

5.d. Manage access in a manner that supports the needs of public and commercial winter recreation, resource-based industries and wildlife in the planning area. Implementation strategies include:

- Plan and develop access routes in collaboration with other winter recreation user groups, and with other resource-based sectors including forestry and mining, considering both short and long term needs for all sectors, including access to lands beyond for industrial or recreation activities.
- Require detailed management plans from proponents of new winter recreation public use areas and for commercial recreation tenures, including renewals and amendments, that specify how access will be managed to minimize impacts on timber harvesting tenure holders.
- Costs resulting from access management and maintenance requirements specifically and solely required to support winter recreation activities are the responsibility of the activity proponent.

5. RECREATION AND TOURISM (CONTINUED)

INITIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- √ A variety of winter recreation activities, including new commercial ventures, are enjoyed within the planning area.
- √ Existing user groups continue to use their traditional areas in ways that are consistent with the objectives of this Chapter.
- √ Operational plans for commercial recreation tenures and public recreation areas clearly detail how the objectives of this Chapter will be implemented.
- √ Winter recreation use and facilities are consistent with the Winter Recreation Management Unit direction provided in Appendix 2.
- √ Recreation activities are integrated with other land-based activities, including forestry and mining, and are enhanced through communication and collaboration.
- √ Access is managed and maintained collaboratively between public and commercial winter recreation users and resource-based industries.
- √ Heli-ski flight plans are developed to avoid direct flights over the community, and to minimize the number of flights over the course of the day departing and returning to the Blue River base.

6. VIEWSCAPES

The planning area is viewed from Highway 5 and the community of Blue River. Currently, the Ministry of Forests requires timber harvesting to be consistent with defined visual quality objectives. The majority of the area is currently managed to achieve Partial Retention - alterations (roads, cut blocks, etc.) may be visible but do not dominate the landscape. On the more distant slopes, alterations may dominate the landscape but the design must borrow from natural features.

Openings created to support winter recreation activities must be designed to ensure they do not appear out of scale or detract from the natural features of the landscape. Such design work should maintain opportunities to harvest adjacent land in the same viewscape.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

Winter recreation infrastructure blends into the landscape, following the natural line and form, so that viewscapes from the town of Blue River and Highway 5 will meet specified visual quality objectives. Winter recreation developments will not appear visually out of scale or detract from natural features of the landscape. They will also be designed to minimize impacts on adjacent forest management activities.

KAMLOOPS LRMP (1996) DIRECTION:

General Resource Management Zone–Visually Sensitive Areas (Section 2.1.14)

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

6.a. For all new openings, achieve the assigned visual quality objectives as defined through the Kamloops LRMP implementation process. Implementation strategies include:

- Design all openings for winter recreation developments to meet the definition and intent of the established VQOs by applying a wide range of visual design principles, including shape, size, edge diversity, minimum soil disturbance, leave tree/patch retention, etc.[5]
- Develop management plans in conjunction with new tenures, or amendments or renewals of existing winter recreation tenures, that clearly detail how proposed openings will be designed to meet visual management requirements,[5] and how monitoring will occur.

6.b Consider modifying existing cut blocks and ski runs to improve visual appearance when new cut blocks and other developments are planned in adjacent areas.

6.c. Design winter recreation developments in accordance with visual design principles to minimize visual quality constraints on surrounding timber availability.

- Design all openings to minimize cumulative visual impact on adjacent harvestable land by utilizing methods such as Visual Impact Assessments.

[5] Meeting percentage alteration guidelines for the established VQOs will be secondary to meeting the definition and intent of the VQOs and the application of visual design principles.

6. VIEWSCAPES (CONTINUED)

INITIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- √ Management plans for winter recreation infrastructure detail how the resulting openings will be designed to meet visual quality objectives without significantly constraining the ability to harvest the remainder of the viewscape.
- √ Winter recreation developments meet assigned Visual Quality Objectives.
- √ Visual impact of existing cut blocks and ski runs is reduced.
- √ Short term timber availability is not significantly constrained to achieve visual objectives in conjunction with winter recreation infrastructure development.

[5] Meeting percentage alteration guidelines for the established VQOs will be secondary to meeting the definition and intent of the VQOs and the application of visual design principles.

7(1). KEY WILDLIFE SPECIES—GRIZZLY BEARS

Key wildlife species that interact with winter recreation in the planning area are grizzly bear, mountain caribou and mountain goats (provincially designated as *Identified Wildlife*). Unmanaged recreation use may increase the likelihood of population declines and impacts to habitats required by the three species.

Grizzly bears inhabit the entire planning area. Two grizzly population units overlap the planning area and are separated by the highway. Although both populations are considered viable (not threatened), winter recreation infrastructure development and use may modify or displace bears from critical habitats.[6] Bears may be displaced from these habitats by early winter or late winter recreation use. Modification of these habitats resulting from winter recreation use (for example, road construction, timber harvesting for winter recreation development) may also have indirect impacts on spring, summer and fall habitat quality. Bear disturbance and mortality may result from increased road and trail access in any season. Food and garbage attractants may create risks of human/bear encounters and bear mortality.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

Winter recreation activities will incorporate measures to maintain secure, suitable Grizzly Bear habitat. The distribution, quality and quantity of habitat will be sufficient to support healthy, viable Grizzly Bear populations in the planning area. Winter recreation development and activities will not detract from the necessary habitat attributes necessary for denning, feeding, and reproducing.

KAMLOOPS LRMP (1996) DIRECTION:

No Direction Provided

- Educate public and commercial winter recreation users about appropriate behaviour in bear habitat.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

7.a Design winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities to maintain functional integrity of grizzly bear habitat, prevent bear access to human-supplied foods, and minimize bear/human encounters. Implementation strategies include:

- Apply the *Interim Wildlife Guidelines for Commercial Backcountry Recreation in BC* for grizzly bears until guidance is revised.[7] Apply updated guidance when available.
- Identify critical bear habitats and apply this information to site-specific winter recreation planning.
- Locate new winter recreation infrastructure away from high bear use areas or critical habitats.
- Do not conduct recreation activities in close proximity to known denning areas.
- Minimize road and trail development and apply seasonal road restrictions through access planning where appropriate.
- Prevent bear access to human supplied foods.

INITIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- √ Critical bear habitats are identified and used for site-specific winter recreation planning.
- √ New facilities are located away from high use bear areas.
- √ Known denning sites are undisturbed.
- √ Recreation access is developed and managed consistent with the habitat requirements of bears.
- √ Low incidence of bear/human contact and no bear mortalities due to winter recreation.
- √ Commercial recreation operators and public use groups provide Bear Aware training to staff and members.
- √ Communities and residential developments become "Bear Smart Communities."

[6] Critical grizzly bear habitats include herb-dominated avalanche tracks, riparian areas, meadow/wetland complexes and seepage sites, smaller wetter areas including hygric to subhygric sites, glacier lily complexes, and old burns dominated by *Vaccinium* species.

[7] Guidelines apply to both commercial and public recreation.

7(2). KEY WILDLIFE SPECIES—MOUNTAIN CARIBOU

Mountain caribou have recently been designated as threatened in Canada and recovery planning is underway for the population that overlaps the Eight Peaks planning area. There is evidence that in the last few decades North Thompson herd populations have declined. Mountain caribou populations across the province continue to decline. Potential causes for these declines include increased predation due to enhanced access, change in the distribution of other ungulate populations, as well as habitat loss and degradation from forest fragmentation and harvest of old forests. Winter recreation infrastructure development and associated timber harvesting have the potential to impact habitat suitability or promote more rapid population declines.

KAMLOOPS LRMP (1996) DIRECTION:

- *Special Resource Management Zone–North Thompson Caribou Habitat General (Section 2.5.2 Zone H1)*
- *Special Resource Management Zone–North Thompson Caribou Habitat/Recreation and Tourism (Section 2.5.2)*

Within the planning area, an ongoing study of caribou indicates early winter use is concentrated in the planning area west of the highway and a calving area is located west of Storm Creek (see Map 1). Planning should focus on these key habitats to prevent the displacement or disturbance of caribou. Management for long-term habitat supply is also critical. Within the planning area, there is uncertainty that all winter habitats have been identified.[8] There is also concern about the lack of information on winter recreation impacts to lichens, a primary caribou food source. Therefore, flexible management approaches are required to consider and incorporate new information as it becomes available.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

Winter recreation activities will be undertaken in a manner that maintain ssecure, suitable mountain caribou habitat. The distribution, quality, and quantity of habitat will be sufficient to support a healthy, viable caribou population. Winter recreation development and activities will not detract from the necessary habitat attributes necessary for breeding, calving, rearing, and feeding. A strict policy of avoidance of mountain caribou will be practiced by all in the recreation community.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

7.b Design winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in such a way as to maintain the natural distribution of caribou, minimize stress caused by human disturbance and maintain the functional integrity of habitat. Implementation strategies include:

- In addition to the caribou direction from the KLRMP, consider all new information available regarding caribou habitat in the planning area when developing new winter recreation uses and infrastructure.
- Apply the *Interim Wildlife Guidelines for Commercial Backcountry Recreation in BC* for caribou (Mountain ecotype-Red) until guidance is revised. Apply updated guidance when available.
- From May 15 – July 1, do not snowmobile, heli-ski, make non-emergency use of emergency shelters or fly helicopter or aircraft less than 2000m above the ground within the *Caribou Calving Area* (see Map 1).
- From Nov 1 – Jan 15, do not snowmobile, heli-ski, or make non-emergency use of emergency shelters in *Early Winter Caribou Habitat* (see Map 1).
- Do not construct new winter recreation facilities or infrastructure in mapped *Caribou Calving Areas* and *Early Winter Caribou Habitat* (see Map 1).

[8] The most recent Caribou habitat information was considered in preparing this Chapter, particularly for developing Winter Recreation Management Units (see Map 2) and the unit-specific strategies in Appendix 2. The information pertinent to this Chapter is detailed on Map 1. Additional mapped information is available in the Kamloops LRMP. Comprehensive mapping, including updated winter habitat mapping within the planning area, is available from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection.

7(2). KEY WILDLIFE SPECIES—MOUNTAIN CARIBOU CONT'D...

- Avoid creating long-term vehicular access to high elevation[9] subalpine and alpine areas.
- Develop and use flight paths to limit impacts to caribou in the White River South, Diamond Head and Whitewater Units.
- Avoid disturbance of mountain caribou encountered within the planning area by immediately leaving the area they occupy.
- Follow unit-specific direction contained in Appendix 2.

7.c Update existing recreation management plans to better reflect the best available wildlife inventory, guidelines and monitoring procedures. Implementation strategies include:

- In White Lake South, Diamondhead and Whitewater Units, address potential impact on functional integrity of caribou habitat that could occur through simultaneous and/or adjacent harvesting of proposed ski runs and Category A approved cut blocks (for example, consider delaying harvest of some cutblocks to manage longer term availability of suitable habitat; do not harvest parallel linear openings in close proximity [retain 200m or more of mature timber between such openings and limit cleared widths to a maximum of 200m wide]; maintain connected patches of habitat across the slope [maintain 200m distance to cover using various techniques including wildlife tree patches]).

INITIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- √ Absence of new facilities in *Caribou Calving Areas* and *Early Winter Caribou Habitat*.
- √ Snowmobile use is consistent with Desired Future Condition for mountain caribou.
- √ During calving season, snowmobile use does not occur in the *Caribou Calving Area*.
- √ During calving season, helicopters fly at least 2000m above *Caribou Calving Areas*.
- √ Recreation users adopt and follow a code of conduct that includes avoiding mountain caribou.
- √ Monitoring results indicate heli-ski and mountain caribou use of an area do not occur concurrently.
- √ Functional integrity of caribou habitat is maintained consistent with the strategies for applicable recreation management units in Appendices 1 and 2.

[9] Generally above 1600 m in the planning area

7(3). KEY WILDLIFE SPECIES—MOUNTAIN GOATS

Mountain goat critical ranges include both kidding and winter range habitat areas and are mapped based on preliminary inventory for the planning area (see Map 1). The project to identify mountain goat ranges is ongoing and thus new information may become available after completion of the Chapter. There is evidence that mountain goats are disturbed by helicopter traffic and use of existing recreation infrastructure near identified critical ranges. Winter recreation facility construction and operation, and timber harvesting during critical seasons may also disturb goats, particularly in winter range and kidding areas. Recreation disturbance may result in reduced reproduction, displacement from preferred habitats and associated population declines. Within the planning area, there is uncertainty that all winter habitats have been identified. There are conflicts between guidance for management of *Mountain Goat Critical Range* (winter range and kidding areas) and existing tenured heli-ski runs. Therefore, flexible management approaches are required to consider and incorporate new information. Recreation planning will require periodic updates to reflect new inventory, guidelines, and monitoring procedures.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

Winter recreation activities will be undertaken in a manner to maintain secure, suitable mountain goat habitat. The distribution, quality, and quantity of habitat will be sufficient, and the level of disturbance will be minimized to support a healthy, undisturbed, and viable goat population. Winter recreation development and activities will not detract from the necessary habitat attributes required for wintering, breeding, kidding and rearing. A strict policy of avoidance of mountain goat will be practiced by all in the recreation community.

KAMLOOPS LRMP (1996) DIRECTION:

No Direction Provided

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

7.d Design winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities to maintain the natural population distribution of mountain goats, avoid harassment of animals caused by recreation use, and maintain habitat quality. Implementation strategies include:

- Apply the *Interim Wildlife Guidelines for Commercial Backcountry Recreation in BC* for mountain goats until guidance is revised. Apply updated guidance when available.
- Maintain a healthy and viable population of mountain goats within the Eight Peaks planning area.
- Prohibit construction of new winter recreation facilities or infrastructure and new roads or trails that provide access to alpine areas in mapped *Mountain Goat Critical Range*.
- From Nov 1 – Jul 15, do not snowmobile, heli-ski, make non-emergency use of emergency shelters or fly helicopter or aircraft less than 2000m above the ground within the mapped *Mountain Goat Critical Range* (see Map 1).
- From Nov 1 – Jul 15, do not fly helicopter or aircraft less than 2000m above the ground within the mapped *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer*[10] (see Map 1).
- Coordinate recreation management activities in Ptarmigan and Saddle Mountain Recreation Units to avoid impacting mountain goat use and habitat quality in critical range in the adjacent Ridge Recreation Unit.
- Avoid disturbance of mountain goats encountered within the planning area by

[10] The modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer reflects the presence of intervening terrain. The boundary may need to be amended pending field reviews.

7(3). KEY WILDLIFE SPECIES—MOUNTAIN GOATS (CONTINUED)

immediately leaving the area they occupy.

- Develop and use flight paths to limit impacts to mountain goats in Ridge, Saddle, Ptarmigan, and Saddle Winter Recreation Management Units (see Map 2).
- Follow unit-specific direction contained in Appendix 2.

7.e Update existing recreation management plans to better reflect the best available wildlife inventory, guidelines and monitoring procedures. Implementation strategies include:

- In the upper Mud drainage (Ridge unit), address conflicts between the winter recreation use of existing heli-ski runs/ infrastructure (e.g. grizzly hut) and mountain goat use of adjacent critical range.[11]
- In the drainage on the east side of Ptarmigan Mountain (Ridge unit), use of existing tenured runs together with proposed intensive recreation use in the Ptarmigan Unit will create cumulative risk to adjacent *Mountain Goat Critical Range*. Address the potential for cumulative impacts to mountain goats and inability to establish effective monitoring techniques associated with proposed Ptarmigan Recreation Management Unit heli-ski runs.[12]
- In the Cook Creek drainage (Diamondhead Unit), address conflicts between recreation use of existing heli-ski runs and ongoing assessment of use by mountain goat of adjacent *Mountain Goat Critical Range*.[13]

INITIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

√ Multi-year monitoring establishes critical habitat mapping, and mountain goat use of critical range is maintained or enhanced.

√ Absence of facilities in mountain goat winter ranges and kidding areas.

√ From Nov 1 – Jul 15, helicopters fly at least 2000m above the ground when crossing *Mountain Goat Critical Range* and *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer*.

11 For example, review and consider relocating certain heli-ski runs to areas outside of the *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer*.

12 Operational advice indicates that cumulative impacts to mountain goat population on the east slopes of Ptarmigan can only be avoided by relocating existing east slope runs to areas outside the *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* or by stopping the proposal to develop new runs in the Ptarmigan Unit.

13 For example, do not use ski runs within the *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* until assessment of range is complete. Address conflicts between recreation use and goals if assessment confirms goats are using the critical range area.

APPENDIX 2 — WINTER RECREATION MANAGEMENT UNIT STRATEGIES

Winter Recreation Management units (see Map 2) have been defined based on stewardship requirements, the existing winter recreation activities, and the opportunities for expanded or new activities. As technology changes and the number of people enjoying winter recreation activities increases, so too increases the potential for conflict between different types of activities, negative impact on the environment, and degradation of the recreation experience. This planning Chapter provides direction to focus compatible uses in specified units. Strategies are detailed for each unit to guide implementation of the management objectives and ensure that there are a variety of sustainable winter recreation experiences available.

The references to "activities that could be compatible" in the Desired Future Conditions statements describe activities that could be appropriate within the defined unit if they are made consistent with the objectives of the Chapter. Where activities might overlap, collaborative agreements should be pursued to maximize opportunities for multiple uses and minimize conflict. They may be public or commercial. The activities mentioned in the Desired Future Conditions are intended to indicate an activities focus, and are not intended to be an exhaustive list. Other activities may be compatible.

As detailed in the main chapter document and Appendix 1, all Winter Recreation Management Units are within Simpcw (North Thompson Indian Band)/Secwepemc claimed traditional territory. For all units, winter recreation activities should not affect the ability of First Nations to continue traditional sustenance, cultural, and spiritual activities. The biological richness and services of terrestrial and aquatic processes (for example, water quality, soils and vegetation productivity, species richness, predator/prey interactions, etc.) should be maintained at all scales through time.

1. RIDGE UNIT

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

The primary objective for this unit is to ensure that the needs of key wildlife species including mountain goat and caribou are not compromised by winter recreation. Activities will typically be non-motorized; although some heli-skiing and road- or trail-based snowmobile touring will be enjoyed where the risk to sensitive wildlife species is minimal. Historical recreation activities will be modified to mitigate wildlife impacts. New or expanded activities that could be compatible in this unit include backcountry ski touring and ice climbing outside the *Mountain Goat Critical Range*, and low intensity heli-skiing outside the *Mountain Goat Habitat Buffer*. Low intensity snowmobile use, mainly on existing roads and trails may be developed where it does not impact mountain caribou.

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage winter recreation activities that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition statement above.
- Manage this backcountry unit as generally non-roaded. Some two-wheel drive and four-wheel drive roads and trails will exist.
- Develop winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in the mapped *Caribou Calving Area, Mountain Goat Critical Range, Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* (see Map 1) in a manner consistent with the objectives and strategies, including unit-specific direction, for mountain goat and caribou in Appendix 1 (see Section 7).
- In the upper Mud drainage (Ridge unit), address conflicts between the winter recreation use of existing heli-ski runs/ infrastructure (e.g. grizzly hut) and mountain goat use of adjacent critical range.[1]
- Maintain current levels and distribution of snowmobiling in this unit until additional scientific data including mapping is available to confirm the compatibility of snowmobiling and mountain caribou.[2]

[1] For example, review and consider relocating certain heli-ski runs to areas outside of the *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer*.
[2] This information should be available by September 2004.

2. REDSANDS/PARBERRY UNIT

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

As a result of continued collaboration between the Blue River Powder Packers snowmobile club, Mike Wiegele Heli-skiing, and new commercial recreation operators, users of this unit will enjoy a diverse selection of motorized activities. Careful joint management will result in maintained quality experiences and ensure that there is no encroachment into key wildlife areas. New or expanded activities that could be compatible in this unit include snowmobiling, snowmobile touring, helicopter and snow-cat skiing.

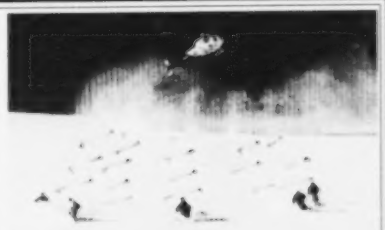
In the Redsands area, including within the *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* (see Map 1), opportunities exist for public snowmobiling, guided snowmobile touring, snow-cat skiing, and combinations of these activities. Activities in this area will need to be formally managed through a tenure or a land use designation, either under the Forest Practices Code or the Land Act, to minimize recreation use conflicts and potential impacts to mountain goat habitat.

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage winter recreation activities that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition statement above.
- Implement a cooperative, managed winter recreation approach in the Redsands area to minimize winter recreation use conflicts and potential impacts on mountain goat habitat.
- Manage Redsands and Parberry Forest Service Roads to maintain access to this unit for controlled motorized recreation use.
- Develop winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in the mapped *Mountain Goat Critical Range* and *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* (see Map 1) consistent with the objectives and strategies, including unit-specific direction, for mountain goat and caribou in Appendix 1 (see Section 7).

3. NORTH MUD LAKE UNIT

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:



This unit will be developed for intensive heli-skiing. In addition to backcountry heli-ski runs,[3] frontcountry heli-ski runs (two open terrain ski runs and four managed forest ski runs) will be established.[4] User groups, including tenure holders, have collaborated to ensure access to the Redsands/Parberry unit is maintained and managed. New and expanded activities that could be compatible in this unit include snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling on designated access routes, and snowmobile touring.

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage winter recreation activities that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition statement above.
- Manage Redsands and Parberry Forest Service Roads to maintain access routes to recreation areas beyond this recreation unit.
- Establish controlled access points into the Redsands and Parberry areas for snowmobile use if required.
- Maintain existing levels of roaded access to and within this unit.
- Develop winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in the mapped *Mountain Goat Critical Range* and *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* (see Map 1) consistent with the objectives and strategies, including unit-specific direction, for mountain goat and caribou in Appendix 1 (see Section 7).

4. SADDLE MOUNTAIN COMMERCIAL RECREATION AREA

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

This unit is tenured as a Commercial Recreation Area to Mike Wiegele Heli-Ski (MWH), and will be managed according to this tenure, with heli-skiing being the dominant recreation use.

STRATEGIES:

- Avoid disturbing mountain goats in the mapped *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* (see Map 1) by maintaining a minimum altitude of 2000m above the ground for all helicopter or aircraft flights November 1 to July 15.
- Develop winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in the mapped *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* in a manner consistent with the objectives and strategies, including unit-specific direction, for mountain goats in Appendix 1 (see Section 7).
- Develop and follow helicopter flight plans to existing backcountry and frontcountry heli-ski runs, that approach from, and depart to, the northwest to reduce recreation disturbance of goats and goat winter habitat use in adjacent critical ranges.

[3] Backcountry heli-ski runs refer to traditional high elevation heli-ski runs that do not require intensive forest stand management.

[4] Rotational heli-ski runs. Temporary heli-ski runs, making use of recently harvested and fully restocked areas until such time as regeneration height impedes skiing or skiing may cause damage to regeneration. At that time, skiing will cease on that area and may move to another recently harvested and fully restocked area. Rotational runs continue to fully contribute to the area timber supply.
Managed Forest Ski Runs. Permanent frontcountry heli-ski runs (200 metre maximum width) created and managed to provide for ski terrain. Forest cover is retained or regenerated to reduce timber avoidably impacts on adjacent working forest lands by contributing to improved visual management, prompt hydrologic green-up to reduce the equivalent clear-cut area (ECA) created within these runs, improved environmental values, and reduced natural hazards. While these runs may be removed from the timber harvesting land base, they will be used to yield intensive silviculture techniques in an effort to regenerate at least part of the run with merchantable timber for future harvesting.

5. PTARMIGAN MOUNTAIN UNIT

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

This unit has been developed for intensive heli-skiing. In addition to backcountry heli-ski runs, new front country heli-ski runs (two open terrain ski runs and nine managed forest ski runs) will be established. Compatible winter recreation activities should be developed to integrate with heli-skiing. New and expanded activities that could be compatible in this unit include ice climbing, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing.

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage winter recreation activities that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition statement above.
- Maintain existing levels of roaded access to and within this unit. As part of operational plan development, (using the "total chance concept"[5]), recreation proponents may need to relocate access routes to minimize conflicts between user groups.
- Develop winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in the mapped *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* in a manner consistent with the objectives and strategies, including unit-specific direction, for mountain goats in Appendix 1 (see Section 7).
- Develop and follow helicopter flight plans for planned frontcountry heli-ski runs, to approach from, and depart to, the west to reduce recreation disturbance of goats and goat winter habitat use in adjacent critical ranges.

6. FROTH UNIT

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

This unit will be developed for intensive heli-skiing. In addition to backcountry heli-ski runs, new frontcountry heli-ski runs (one open terrain ski run and two managed forest ski runs) will be established. Compatible winter recreation activities should be developed to integrate with heli-skiing. New and expanded activities that could be compatible in this unit include snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage winter recreation activities that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition statement above.
- Develop winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in the mapped *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* in a manner consistent with the objectives and strategies, including unit-specific direction, for mountain goats in Appendix 1 (see Section 7).
- Develop and follow helicopter flight plans for planned frontcountry heli-ski runs, to approach from, and depart to, the west or south to reduce recreation disturbance of goats and goat winter habitat use in adjacent critical ranges.

[5] Total Chance Planning" is preliminary long term integrated resource management planning over an entire development area for the best realization of all broader or strategic objectives. It often serves as the link between strategic planning direction and operational details.

7. NORTH THOMPSON RIVER VALLEY UNIT

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

A variety of new and existing motorized and non-motorized frontcountry activities will be enjoyed on this unit that buffers the highway. Activities will be largely focused on roads and trails, and will not be reliant on the sense of remoteness. New and expanded activities that could be compatible in this unit include snowmobiling, snowmobile touring, snowshoeing, and

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage winter recreation activities that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition statement above.
- The local recreation community should establish an advisory committee to seek opportunities to integrate activities and resolve conflicts between overlapping uses before they escalate.

8. WHITE RIVER SOUTH UNIT

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

This unit will support a mix of new and existing motorized and non-motorized uses including high elevation heli-skiing, snowmobiling, limited new frontcountry heli-skiing (one open terrain ski run and three managed forest ski runs) and ski-touring in the White River Valley. All activities will be pursued following a code of conduct that fosters the behaviour necessary to support the mountain caribou. A strict policy of avoidance of mountain goat and caribou will be practiced by all winter recreation users. Activities that could be compatible in this unit include heli-skiing, ski-touring in the White River Valley, snowmobiling, and snowmobile touring.

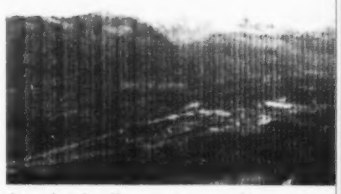
STRATEGIES:

- Encourage winter recreation activities that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition statement above.
- Where existing heli-ski and snowmobile use overlap, commercial recreation tenure holders and snowmobile user groups should cooperatively develop agreements to reduce conflicts.
- Where needed, maintain existing levels of roaded access to and within this unit. As part of operational plan development, (using "total chance concept"), recreation proponents may need to relocate access routes to minimize conflicts between user groups.
- Manage to maintain access to this unit and beyond for controlled motorized recreation use.
- Avoid establishing new roaded access through this unit into the Diamond Head area or into high elevation[6] subalpine and alpine habitats.
- Develop winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in the mapped *Early Winter Caribou Habitat, Mountain Goat Critical Range,* and *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* (see Map 1) in a manner consistent with the objectives and strategies, including unit-specific direction, for mountain goat and caribou in Appendix 1 (see Section 7).
- Maintain current levels and distribution of snowmobiling in this unit until additional scientific data is available to confirm the compatibility of snowmobiling and mountain caribou.

9. DIAMOND HEAD UNIT

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

This unit will be used for new and existing low intensity, non-motorized winter recreation activities including backcountry skiing and snowshoeing in Cook Creek and the White River Valley, and for high elevation heli-skiing and limited new frontcountry skiing (two open terrain ski runs and one managed forest ski run). Activities will be managed to maintain the conditions necessary to support key wildlife species including mountain goat and caribou.



STRATEGIES:

- Encourage winter recreation activities that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition statement above.
- Develop winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in the mapped *Early Winter Caribou Habitat, Mountain Goat Critical Range,* and *Modified 2000m Goat Habitat Buffer* (see Map 1) in a manner consistent with the objectives and strategies, including unit-specific direction, for mountain goat and caribou in Appendix 1 (see Section 7).
- Maintain current levels of snowmobiling in this unit until additional scientific data, including mapping, is available to confirm the compatibility of snowmobiling and mountain caribou.

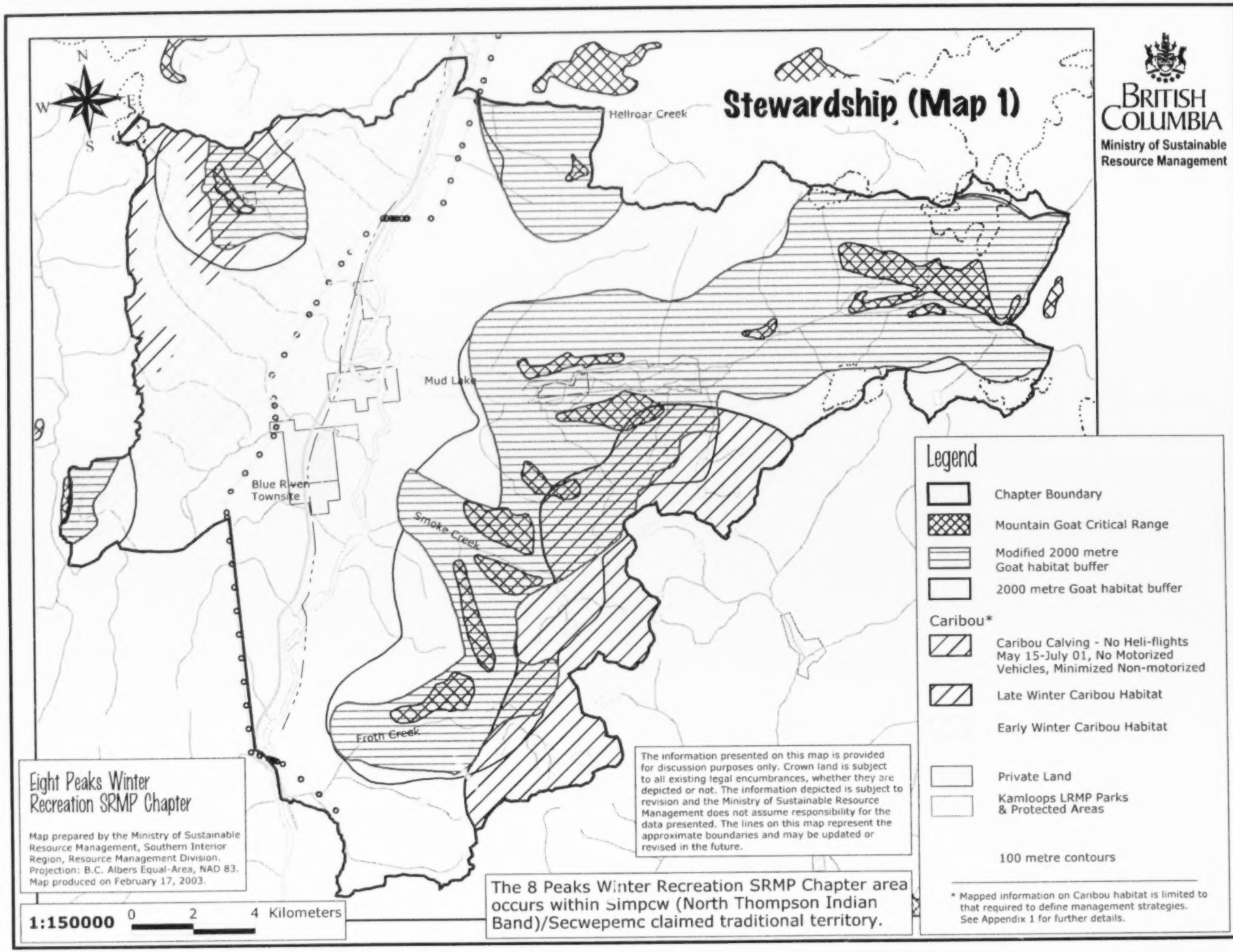
10. WHITEWATER UNIT

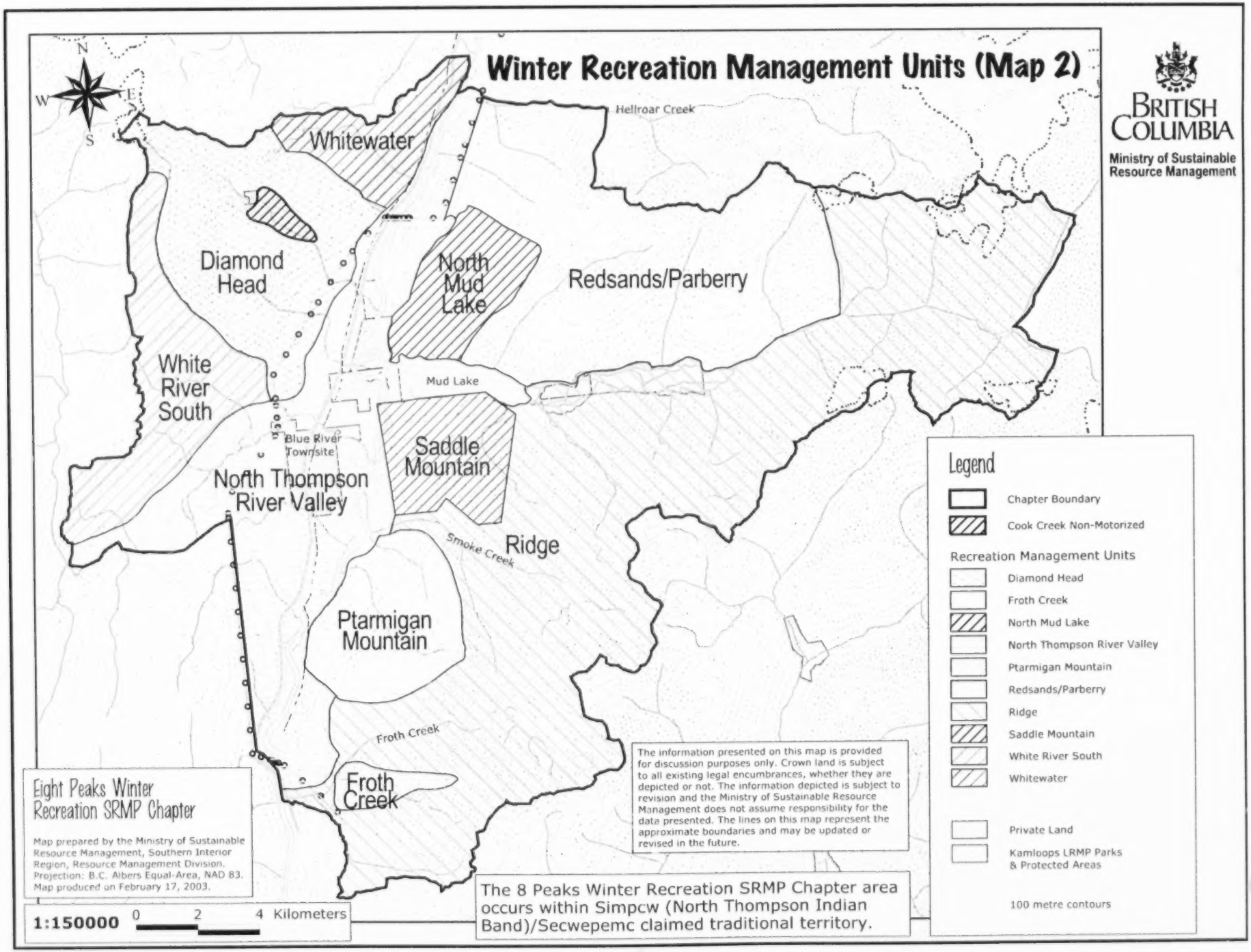
DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:

This unit will be used for a variety of new and existing non-motorized activities including snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and backcountry skiing. Snowmobiling is enjoyed along the eastern boundary of the unit. Activities will be managed to maintain the conditions necessary to support key wildlife species including mountain caribou.

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage winter recreation activities that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition statement above.
- Establish a community recreation committee to bring users together to seek opportunities for integration and resolve conflicts.
- Develop winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in the mapped *Early Winter Caribou Habitat* (see Map 1) in a manner consistent with the objectives and strategies, including unit-specific direction, for mountain goat and caribou in Appendix 1 (see Section 7).
- Maintain current levels and distribution of snowmobiling in this unit until additional scientific data, including mapping, is available to confirm the compatibility of snowmobiling and mountain caribou.


Stewardship (Map 1)
BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
N
W
E
S
Hellroar Creek
Mud Lake
Blue River Townsite
Smoke Creek
Froth Creek
Legend
Chapter Boundary
Mountain Goat Critical Range
Modified 2000 metre Goat habitat buffer
2000 metre Goat habitat buffer
Caribou*
Caribou Calving - No Heli-flights May 15-July 01, No Motorized Vehicles, Minimized Non-motorized
Late Winter Caribou Habitat
Early Winter Caribou Habitat
Private Land
Kamloops LRMP Parks & Protected Areas
100 metre contours
* Mapped information on Caribou habitat is limited to that required to define management strategies. See Appendix 1 for further details.
Eight Peaks Winter Recreation SRMP Chapter
Map prepared by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, Southern Interior Region, Resource Management Division.
Projection: B.C. Albers Equal-Area, NAD 83.
Map produced on February 17, 2003.
1:150000 0 2 4 Kilometers
The information presented on this map is provided for discussion purposes only. Crown land is subject to all existing legal encumbrances, whether they are depicted or not. The information depicted is subject to revision and the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management does not assume responsibility for the data presented. The lines on this map represent the approximate boundaries and may be updated or revised in the future.
The 8 Peaks Winter Recreation SRMP Chapter area occurs within Simpcw (North Thompson Indian Band)/Secwepemc claimed traditional territory.


Winter Recreation Management Units (Map 2)
BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
N
W
E
S
Hellroar Creek
Whitewater
Diamond Head
North Mud Lake
Redsands/Parberry
White River South
Mud Lake
Blue River Townsite
Saddle Mountain
North Thompson River Valley
Smoke Creek
Ridge
Ptarmigan Mountain
Froth Creek
Froth Creek
Legend
Chapter Boundary
Cook Creek Non-Motorized
Recreation Management Units
Diamond Head
Froth Creek
North Mud Lake
North Thompson River Valley
Ptarmigan Mountain
Redsands/Parberry
Ridge
Saddle Mountain
White River South
Whitewater
Private Land
Kamloops LRMP Parks & Protected Areas
100 metre contours
Eight Peaks Winter Recreation SRMP Chapter
Map prepared by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, Southern Interior Region, Resource Management Division. Projection: B.C. Albers Equal-Area, NAD 83. Map produced on February 17, 2003.
1:150000 0 2 4 Kilometers
The information presented on this map is provided for discussion purposes only. Crown land is subject to all existing legal encumbrances, whether they are depicted or not. The information depicted is subject to revision and the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management does not assume responsibility for the data presented. The lines on this map represent the approximate boundaries and may be updated or revised in the future.
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8 Peaks Sustainable Resource Management Plan
Terms of Reference

September 16, 2002

Background

The town of Blue River is situated on the Yellowhead Highway approximately 210 km north of Kamloops, British Columbia. Forestry and tourism are the strongest economic drivers in the local economy. Frequent heavy snowfalls, and high annual snowfall accumulation, make Blue River and areas north along the Yellowhead Highway attractive for winter recreation. Snowmobiling and heliskiing are well established winter sports here. Currently tourism oriented snowmobiling activities are focused north of Blue River and around the town of Valemount, approximately 90 km north. Blue River has several snowmobiling areas used principally by local residents. The operations base for Mike Wiegele Helisking (MWH) is also in Blue River. MWH operates over the mountain ranges that bound much of the North Thompson River Valley.

Helicopter skiing (heli-skiing) and snowcat skiing are recognized as an important winter tourism industry that offers a unique experience. On a combined basis the two activities bring approximately $100 million dollars to the British Columbia economy annually, and attract visitors from around the world. Snowmobiling is also a growing tourism activity, generating significant economic benefit for nearby Valemount.

In the Blue River area the forest industry licensees and MWH recently recognized the opportunity to integrate timber harvesting with ski run development. Trial runs were established on Ptarmigan Mountain. These "temporary" or "transitory" heliski runs are used as ski runs until the skiing impacts forest regrowth. Successful use of these trial areas has led to a proposal to develop approximately 1062 ha of permanent and approximately 1171ha. (approximately 350 ha will be in use at any one time) of transitory runs on several other forested slopes in the vicinity of Blue River (for this project this area is referred to as the 8 Peaks area).

In early 2002, MWH and the Ministry of Forests (MOF) approached the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM) and requested that a strategic level plan be developed to integrate forest management, heliski run development and other winter recreation pursuits.

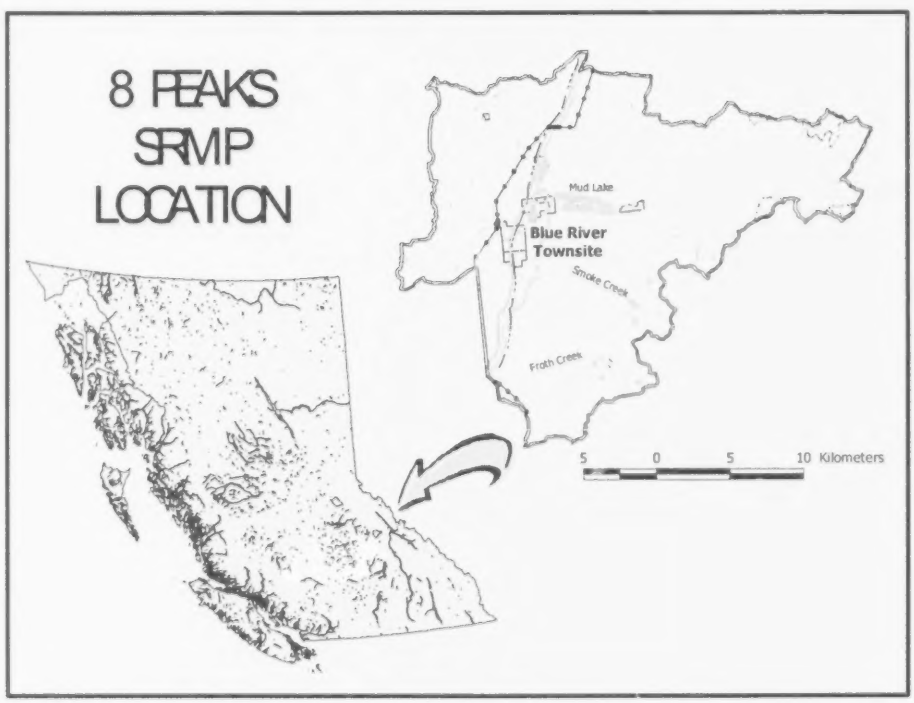
Planning Context

The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management's (MSRM's) mandate includes the development of plans that consolidate management direction for any number of resource values with consideration for both economic interests and environmental stewardship.

Economic development is assisted by focused land use planning that can increase economic opportunities, increase certainty of access to Crown resources and provide a sustainability framework that can be used as a basis for decision making. The new sustainable resource management planning framework (*Sustainable Resource Management Planning, A Landscape level Strategy for Resource Development*, MSRM, May 2002) provides guidance for the development of area-specific plans that bring together information from existing planning processes, consider and address issues and give strategic direction to sustainable economic development of crown land resources. The May 2002 planning framework is one of the basic tools for creating the 8 Peaks Sustainable Resource Development Plan (SRMP).

Planning Area Description

The 8 Peaks planning area comprises approximately 44,500 ha, and includes front country mountain slopes within approximately 15 km of the town of Blue River (see illustration below). These slopes, with the exception of those facing the Mud River drainage overlook the North Thompson River valley. The plan area is primarily bounded by heights of land and sub-drainages within the Thunder Blue, Avola and Mud Landscape Units. The forested land base of the plan area is primarily within the Interior Cedar Hemlock and the Engelmann Spruce Subalpine Fir biogeoclimatic zones. The area around Blue River is characterized by cool winters and moderate summers. It is not uncommon to see annual accumulations of four meters of snow at valley bottom level. The town of Blue River has a population of about 450 full time residents.



Plan Purpose

The goal of the 8 Peaks SRMP is to establish resource management objectives that create conditions that support forestry, heliskiing and other winter recreation activities while incorporating the principles of sustainability and stewardship.

Scope and Limitations

The plan will consider the opportunities to enhance, integrate and balance winter recreation activities, including integration of heliski opportunities with forest operations and will:

- Develop direction to manage winter recreation activities including heliskiing and snowmobiling to avoid conflict, (tools may include physical separation of activities, or in some specific cases, exclusive use for specific activities may be recommended) integrate use with other activities including forestry, and mitigate negative impact on sensitive wildlife species such as mountain goat and caribou.

- Develop specific and any "non-standard" forestry techniques and/or objectives that can be used to support, where appropriate, heli-ski run construction, use and management while balancing impacts on visual quality, forest productivity and revenue (example – modified restocking of ski runs).

- Take strategic direction from existing plans (*Kamloops LRMP, Lakes LRUP)* and give consideration to *Park Management Plans*, the *Blue River Official Community Plan* and the draft 1998 *Thunder Blue Landscape Unit Plan*,

- Utilize input from the ongoing old growth management area process currently under way for the Kamloops LRMP area.

- Recognize that there are numerous existing and potential environmental stewardship concerns and interests, and that there is a need to plan for winter recreation activities accordingly. The plan should incorporate the flexibility to include other interests and environmental values during future planning.

- Attempt to engage First Nations in plan development and to seek to accommodate First Nations interests prior to plan approval.

- Be consistent with the MSRM's *Sustainability Principles* (May 22, 2002).

The plan will not:

- Provide operational authorizations to harvest timber, to conduct a heliski operation, or provide any other authorization that is normally required under other Provincial Acts. While the plan may address numerous issues that may otherwise need to be addressed in each operational application, thereby streamlining operational applications, there will still be a need for normal operational applications.

- Address issues associated with residential or private land management or the development of the Blue River town site. Local government planning processes typically address such issues.

- Consider non-winter recreational issues. Future planning processes for the North Thompson valley may address recreational development and opportunities for other seasons.

- Make changes to Mountain Caribou Guidelines. The Kamloops LRMP Caribou Subcommittee, reporting the Monitoring Committee of the Kamloops LRMP is addressing caribou management in the North Thompson.

- Revisit the Saddle Mountain master planning process. This process was completed in November 2000 under the Province's Commercial Alpine Ski Policy.

- Attempt to solve existing and geographically widespread (North Thompson Valley) interrelationships between existing snowmobiling, existing heli-skiing, and caribou management. Issues relating to potential conflicts between snowmobile use and the proposed heliski runs within the 8 Peaks SRMP will be addressed in the 8 Peaks process. On a larger scale, and dependant of priorities, MSRM intends to initiate a separate process to address the more geographically widespread issues (Issue collection is under way for this broader process).

- Examine issues related to park management planning (eg. Blue River Black Spruce Provincial Park). Provincial Park management is under the jurisdiction of WLAP – BC Parks.

Partnership

In response to an offer made by MWH, MSRM is preparing an agreement with MWH to ensure adequate resources are available for the timely completion of this planning process. This partnership is intended to ensure that planning process delivery dates are met, but will not influence the direction or outcome of the project.

MWH and forest licensees will still be required to apply for the necessary permits and approvals prior to development. This plan will not fetter the discretion of the statutory decision makers.

MSRM Role:

MSRM will write the sustainable development plan with input from an advisory group and within the context of the scope of the terms of reference, and give consideration to the issues identified by the process.

Advisory Group

To assist in the development planning process, an advisory group will be formed. Members may include government agencies, private sector businesses, recreation associations and groups, clubs and others familiar with the interests and activities currently under way in the area.

Some potential advisory group members are shown below. This list is preliminary and may be amended as the process unfolds.

- Ministry of Forests
- First Nations
- Mike Wiegele Heliskiing
- Brent Harley and Associates
- Forest sector
- Land and Water BC
- Blue River Powder Packers
- Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection

The advisory group members will assist in the provision, collection and transfer of information and advice to MSRM and will, as deemed necessary by MSRM, be invited to comment on various parts of the plan and process. Advisory group participation is intended to assist MSRM in producing a plan that all advisory team members can substantially support.

Timeframe

The planning process will commence September 16, 2002, with a proposed completion date of December 16, 2002.

The plan development will include the following steps:

Step	Completion
• Develop work plan	Early Sept 2002
• Develop TOR, partnerships	Early Sept 2002
• Issue identification, information/data collection	September 2002
• Input and consultation	Late October 2002
• Plan development	Late October 2002
• Plan review	Mid November 2002
• Plan completion	Mid December 2002
• Plan approval	Mid December 2002

Implementation of Plan will start January 2003

Potential Concerns

Concerns that can be expected, among other things, include:

- Visual quality management
- Access Management – public/commercial/ industrial and relationship to development investment
- Environmental assessments (eg. terrain stability)
- Management tools, implementablity, transition to operational plans
- Wildlife management – particularly mountain goat, caribou and grizzly bear
- Cost/benefits analysis, including consideration potential stumpage impacts and heliski revenues
- Compatibility with existing and future planning process – need for flexibility and adaptability.

Deliverables:

The completed plan should provide:

- A vision for the planning area
- Overall goals winter recreation management, ski-run development and associated values
- Results based objectives that are required to meet the goals
- Criteria and indicators for monitoring plan success
- A process for plan amendment
- Implementation plan

_____ Date: _____

APPROVED
Steve Carr, A/Regional Director
Southern Interior Region
Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management Plan